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Inhalt

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Is Gramsci Dead: Revisiting Hegemony in 21st Century Music Education

This paper considers three of the questions posed by the AMPF conference this year: whether (and if so, how, my insertion) music education as a discipline has adapted to social changes? what forms of resistance it has produced and might yet produce? and what innovations it might yield? They are considered in the light of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the ideas presented in Small's (1977) work Music, Society, Education and Day's refutation of Gramsci and the 'hegemony of hegemony'. It is suggested that anarchist social theory may offer some useful routes of resistance to the hegemonic effects of neoliberal educational policy on music education and offer some slight potential for Small's ideas still to become a reality at a future date.

Introduction

The topic of the German Association for Research in Music Education (*Arbeitskreis Musikpädagogische Forschung e.V.*) conference this year – Social Aspects of Music Learning – was one very close to this author's heart, as my own work is in the field of the sociology of music education. The following questions play central roles in research in music education and particularly in research in the sociology of music education: How can one characterize successful participation in musical culture? How can we encourage this pedagogically? and Can music education compensate for social disadvantage? One might venture to say that they are key questions for the future of music education in general, if there is to be such a future in compulsory schooling, something that is a matter of some doubt in a number of countries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean at the time of writing.

This paper addresses another of the elements of the social aspects of music learning discussed in the conference overview – that is whether (and if so, how, my insertion) music education as a discipline has adapted to social changes, what forms of resistance it has produced and might yet produce and what innovations it might yield.

The paper is based on my experiences as a music educator and researcher for more than 25 years in compulsory, post-compulsory and studio music education

in Canada and the UK. It draws on discussions with colleagues resulting from papers given and heard at national and international music education conferences, and communications with colleagues through music education professional networks. It is always of great interest to present one's ideas at conferences in other countries and to discuss whether one's perspectives are relevant to music education in that location and if not, how, and why. I was delighted to discuss my work with colleagues in Germany therefore but, of course, time is always our enemy in these situations and I would be delighted to continue these discussions by email subsequently.

Revisiting Music, Society, Education

In essence, the AMPF conference in 2017 considered the fields of music, society and education and their interrelationships, as did the book *Music Society Education* authored by Christopher Small (1977) at forty years distance from 2017. This book has become one of the seminal texts in the field of sociology and music education and has also been very influential in the fields of musicology and music education. It seems appropriate therefore to revisit Small's ideas at such a juncture, to consider whether they still hold any resonance for us after the passage of forty years, and to assess whether, in terms of the conference description, music education as a discipline has adapted to social changes since the time of Small's writing, and if so, how? what forms of resistance it has produced and might yet produce? and what innovations it might have yielded?

First, it would be helpful to remind ourselves of the key ideas from Small's work. He opens by stating that the generally held assumption in Europe and the Americas at the time of writing is that "the musical tradition of post Renaissance Europe and her offshoots is one of the most brilliant and astonishing cultural phenomena of human history." (Small, 1977, p. 1) This, Small suggests, is matched only by one other intellectual achievement – the science of the same era. He suggests that it is unsurprising therefore that for many who have inherited these twin traditions they are seen as the norms and ideals – the first for music and the second for knowledge acquisition.

He attributes to this confidence in the innate superiority of both culture and epistemology the conviction underlying European colonialism with its attendant imposition of European culture, customs and values on much of the rest of the world.

He suggests that education, or rather schooling as, after Illich he prefers it to be termed, has worked to perpetuate a state of mind in which nature exists as an object of use. In this model, products are regarded as all important, regardless of the process of obtaining them, and knowledge is something 'out there', abstract and independent of the knower.

Importantly, Small sees music, society, and education as enmeshed and interlinked in a relationship where change in one field necessitates change in the others. He states however that other musics show that different musical aesthetics are possible and that such different aesthetics suggest different societal patterns and relationships with nature and with one another. North American music, for instance, he considers, contains within it a "vision of a potential society [...] stronger and more radical than anything in European culture." (Small, 1977, p. 3) Such a new vision of art, he suggests, could serve as a model for a new vision of education and possibly of society.

Small's work rests on two postulates: first that art is more than the production of objects of beauty, it is a process through which we explore environments – inner and outer – and learn to live in them. We make a model of reality, present and potential. Moreover, Small suggests that art can help others to do the same and that therefore despite its societal devaluation since the Renaissance, art is still as vital an activity as science because it can reach further into areas that remain barred to science.

The second postulate is that the techniques and attitudes of art reveal the nature of the society that gave rise to the artwork. Small claimed that art can help us live in the world, science to master it. He therefore insisted on the supreme importance of the art process over the art product, despite the fact that the enthronement of the scientific paradigm as the dominant form of knowledge acquisition places societal emphasis upon product at all costs with scant regard to process.

For this reason, Small (1977) suggested that schools impart almost entirely abstract knowledge completely divorced from the circumstances of its production. Students are trained to learn that they can become knowledge consumers but not producers and that only knowledge consumed in school is valid. He suggested "We know more about the world, and experience it less, than perhaps any previous generation in history." (Small, 1977, p. 5) Similarly, he suggested, musicology has made more knowledge about music available to us but our experience of music is diluted by being mediated through experts.

He suggested at the end of the book however that there were alternatives to this scientistic mode of education based on artistic modes that placed children in the roles of knowledge creators:

> "By allowing our pupils the opportunity to make music in the present tense, we can introduce into the school, through this largely unregarded (because for most people it is not directly related to the needs of earning a living) area of activity, a concept that can overthrow the future-oriented, instrumental ethos of the school, and the preoccupation with producing a product. For if we acknowledge the creative power of children in art, we must also recognize their ability to create other forms of knowledge (since art is a form of knowledge, but knowledge that is directly experienced rather than absorbed in the abstract), and to ask their own questions, which

> often cross the boundaries of our own treasured subjects and specialities." (Small, 1977, p. 216)

Small suggested that artistic activity could serve as a model for what work could be – enthusiastically entered into with love not force, using the whole self, reason, intuition, ruthless self-criticism, and realistic assessment. Not forced, monotonous, boring, as he claimed much work was in his day.

He suggested that changes in western art in the twentieth century show that

> "there are in fact forces within the matrix of society that are favourable to these changes, which could bring about our liberation from the scientistic and technocratic domination of our lives, from the pointless and repetitious labour that passes for work for most people, and, for our children, from the scars inflicted by our present schools, well-intentioned though they may be, on all those, successful and unsuccessful alike, that passed through them." (Small, 1977, p. 5)

Small's analysis of the situation concerning the relationships between music, society and education appears to present a reasonably fair starting point from which to analyse the first of the AMPF questions to which I shall address myself in this paper, that is has music education adapted to social change? as we can use this intervening period of forty years to consider whether social changes have occurred relative to the issues Small identified, whether music education has adapted in relation to them, and if not why not. To do so, however, we need a conceptual framework capable of the task.

Small, Gramsci and Hegemony

The work of Italian Marxist writer Antonio Gramsci is particularly informative when read in conjunction with that of Small in this respect, as we find in Gramsci's writing on culture and power an understanding of the relationships between these two bridging societal constructs. The concept of hegemony was described by Gramsci as "[A] *condition in process* in which a dominant class (in alliance with other classes or class fractions) does not merely *rule* a society but *leads* it through the exercise of 'moral and intellectual leadership'" (Gramsci in Storey, 1998, p. 210, italics in original).

Gramsci therefore developed the term hegemony to describe the way in which the leading and dominating functions of the dominant political force in a society are achieved through the manufacture of consensus. Ideology, and crucially culture, are key to this process. As Strinati states:

> "Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a

> political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups." (Strinati, 1995, p. 165)

In other words, hegemony works by obtaining general societal 'buy-in' to the idea of the innate superiority and 'rightness' of the ideas and cultural tastes of the most powerful social group. This involves a process whereby the perception of the views and tastes of the powerful as inarguably superior becomes so ingrained that it is accepted as common sense. The group that holds most of the capital in these particular spheres therefore becomes viewed by society as rightly superior and therefore justly dominant.

For Raymond Williams, founding father of cultural studies, this moved the game forward considerably in thinking about culture. As Williams states "Hegemony goes beyond 'culture', as previously defined in its insistence on relating the 'whole' social process to specific distributions of power and influence" (1973, p. 108).

The concept of hegemony therefore has remained a powerful notion in sociological analysis of the interrelationships of culture, society, and politics and the ways in which they may dominate, exclude and oppress. It may be used to clarify and explain the mechanisms by which adaptation may or may not have occurred in music education in response to social change.

I shall come back to this again shortly. Much subsequent work has been carried out by sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu in further analysing the intricacies of the relationships between culture, society and education in enacting hegemony through acts Bourdieu describes as symbolic violence thus: "Every power to exert symbolic violence, i. e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 4). This complex statement describes as symbolic violence the way in which society disguises under the pretence of equal education for all, the distributive injustices and outcomes determined by unequal distribution of social advantage. This will be of importance in the sections to follow.

Hegemony and Social Change with Respect to Music Education

It is therefore, as I stated above, an interesting juncture at which to return to these concepts in consideration of the ideas of Christopher Small, and to ask whether society has changed in the respects Small discussed in the intervening years and if so, how music education as a discipline has adapted to social changes, what forms of resistance it has produced and might yet produce, and what innovations it might have yielded.

Firstly, Small discusses the power of the post-Renaissance European musical/cultural traditions. He detected in these the cultural confidence required for European colonialism and suggested that this had also affected the pedagogical approach to music where those with power in determining official pedagogy in the subject assumed the superiority of the western classical canon and approached music education as a process of transmitting mastery of this tradition to novice apprentices. For a number of reasons, I have diagnosed a disturbing lack of progress in higher music education in this area since Small's work was published. This is despite the fact that patterns of general societal cultural consumption have changed considerably since the 1970s, as identified in Peterson's (1992) and Peterson and Kern's (1996) extension of Bourdieu's theory of cultural stratification in the concept of 'cultural omnivorousness'. Whereas in the past high status was marked by informed consumption of elite cultural capital, these researchers have detected a shift from the highbrow snob interested only in consuming elite culture to the cultural omnivore interested in widely sampling culture both high and that formerly designated as popular or lowbrow to demonstrate breadth and discernment of taste.

If higher music education were to have adapted to social change therefore, one might expect corresponding changes to appear in the form of broader repertoires and forms of pedagogy to reflect a general societal expansion of cultural taste. In compulsory education in many countries, other than the Nordic countries, however one sees a higher music education that still reflects an uncritical assumption of the superiority of western art music and reifies musics and musicians, languages and literatures, to reproduce an outdated cultural hegemony.

As a result of the situation above, the social composition of the cohorts of students entering higher education in music education changes very little if at all from year to year, or indeed decade to decade in many institutions. This is especially so in the case of the composition of the cohorts of students entering music education programs in North America. Therefore, unexamined hegemonic values continue to be transmitted from generation to generation of music educators resulting in the exclusion of many young people from music education.

A similar confidence in the post-Renaissance positivist epistemology had, according to Small, perpetuated a state of mind in which knowledge was an abstract entity existing independently of the knower and in which the knowledge product was far more important than the process by which the product was arrived at. Small claimed that students were trained in schools to become consumers of knowledge not producers and to value only their school knowledge.

Small saw the contemporary education system as 'future-oriented' governed by an 'instrumental ethos' and preoccupied with product over process (see Small, 1977, p. 216). Children were passive recipients of abstract knowledge about music education (governed by an implicit belief in the superiority of the western art music canon and the authority of the master over the student apprentice). They received knowledge about music and its literacies before they were per-

mitted to engage in its re-creation. Learning about music was valued over experience of actually making music, creation of music was reserved for the few designated by society as composers.

How does the current music education system in schools compare to Small's analysis now? Sadly, despite a flowering of student centred, creative and culturally broader music education in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s in some countries (in composing e.g. Swanwick, Paynter, Schaeffer; music of other cultures e.g. Farrell, Kwame, Shehan-Campbell; popular music and informal pedagogy e.g. Folkestad, Green to name but a few) the neo-liberal global education policy has asserted an even firmer future orientation on education in most countries in present times. Education has become even more strongly instrumentalised, its only purpose now as training for a career, to the extent that even the pretense of a place for the arts and humanities is now disappearing from compulsory education and university campuses alike.

Where music is permitted to remain as a school subject, the hegemonic reimposition of a curriculum firmly underpinned by western art music cultural domination is becoming steadily more apparent. One example of this is the growing number of programs inspired by Venezuela's *El Sistema* model that is appearing in countries around the globe. Focusing strongly on the western art music canon, the appearance in the early 21st century of 'new' music education models dedicated to transmitting the musical practices of a body of music found in a geographically limited area of the European subcontinent for a reasonably limited amount of time and utilising a pedagogy firmly centred in a reproductive master-apprentice model seems somewhat bizarre. These appear to represent typical examples of the neo liberal pedagogical process Adams (2013, p. 243) speaks of when he states that it "operates by reducing creative practices to passively reproductive activities, usually in the form of replicating canonical works, irrespective of their relevance or appropriateness". One of the many concerns such programs raise relates to the cultural relevance of their repertoire to the children and young people with whom they engage and the extent to which these students have agency or voice in their education (Wright, submitted) as Adams (2013) proceeds to state "Such reductive practices, which may nonetheless be attractive or sumptuously decorative, effectively exclude the learners' voices, or learners as directors of their own learning" (Adams, 2013, p. 243).

In a similar way, neo liberal states have also subtly directed pedagogies in compulsory schooling in music away from those allowing students more voice in their learning and towards those that reassert the authority of the teacher. For example, as Spruce (2013) observed of the UK's National Music Plan, it was characterised by "promotion of particular types of pedagogies, models, and sites of musical learning that encourage uniformity and homogeneity while at the same time downplaying those pedagogies that encourage individuality, diversity, and pupil agency" (Spruce, 2013, p. 113). As high stakes testing assumes an ever-larger role in the educational lives of our children, it appears that pedagogies of uni-

formity and homogeneity as Spruce terms them, quick, efficient routes to acquisition of the knowledge product, are replacing any previous time for educational curiosity or exploration.

Research appearing from the Nordic countries, apparently former bastions of forward thinking practice in popular music education, also identifies a hegemonic process termed 'musical gentrification' at work here (Dyndahl 2013, 2015; Dyndahl, Karlsen, Skårberg & Nielsen 2014; Dyndahl, Karlsen, Nielsen & Skårberg, 2016). These researchers have discovered that even as "people and groups [...] may appear to be consistently open-minded, change-oriented and inclusive of diverse voices and perspectives, [they may also] classify, marginalise and ultimately [to] exclude" (Dyndahl 2015, p. 20; see also the contribution in this book) new musics as they become 'gentrified' as part of a new canon of popular music. Nor does this process apply only as popular musics are sorted and classified by strata within the populace at large. Of key interest to music education as a field is Dyndahl et al.'s finding that this process operates equally as popular musics enter academia. Genres of popular music and the scholars who study them are subject to hegemonic forces derived from a new hierarchy of class and taste produced by forces of scholarly power and control. Neither are society's other webs of intersecting discriminatory factors absent from this complex situation, with matters such as gender also at play here.

So, it appears that where music education has attempted to adapt to social change, it has been unable to escape the power of hegemony, what Small (1977) termed its 'power sickness' and 'need to dominate'. Even where Small saw hope, in for example the musics of North America such as popular music, hegemony has found ways to enter societal institutions and impose means of domination.

Prospects for Change

This brings us then to the other AMPF conference questions which I will address in this paper: what forms of resistance has music education produced, might yet produce, and what innovations might it have yielded? Looking more broadly at relationships between music, society and education, Small suggested that they are interrelated and that change in any one necessitates change in the others. Small saw in an art form a reflection of the nature of the society that gave rise to that art, and suggested that other musics show different aesthetics are possible. He suggested that they foreshadow different societal patterns and relationships. He saw great promise in this respect in models of education based on an artistic experiential mode that permitted children to become knowledge creators and placed them in agentic roles within their education. He saw this as implying a model of a better society and indicated that changes in art that had occurred in the twentieth century indicated there was societal potential for such a future.

Former attempts within the educational community to reform education to such ends, such as the progressive education movement of the 1960s and subsequent feminist and queer educational research have often tended to follow in Gramsci's vein in attempting to redefine the nature of high status knowledge to make it serve progressive social needs. To this end, Apple (2013) has advocated for researchers to act as critical secretaries to groups engaged in counter hegemonic social reform; to use and give back to communities the intellectual and pedagogic skills necessary to engage in debate concerning the nature of important knowledge and a socially just education.

Unfortunately, as my writings above have attempted to illustrate, the effects of these engagements seem to have been minimal in mitigating against the inroads of hegemony, particularly so in the control of elite culture (old and new) over the hierarchies within music education. For these reasons, the thought of Day (2004, 2005) has been of interest to me of late (Wright, 2017a, 2017b).

A Canadian political scientist, Richard Day's book (2005) *Gramsci is Dead* challenges "the hegemony of hegemony" (p. 19) suggesting that "hegemony must therefore be approached genealogically, as a discourse with a history that deeply conditions our present understandings and possibilities (Foucault 1985, p. 19)." Day's work proceeds to trace this genealogy, demonstrating how:

> "despite their many historical and theoretical differences, classical Marxism and liberalism share a belief that there can be no 'freedom' without the state form (Leviathan or dictatorship of the proletariat), and therefore also share a commitment to political (state-based) rather than social (community-based) modes of social change. The paradoxical belief that state domination is necessary to achieve 'freedom' is perhaps the defining characteristic of the hegemony of hegemony, in both its Marxist and liberal variants" (Day, 2005, p. 20)

Day suggests that it is this limiting effect, which he terms "the logic of hegemony" (Day, 2005, p. 20) which has imposed boundaries upon the reformative power of both Marxist revolution and liberal/post Marxist reformism. He suggests those limits have now been reached. He holds up however a different route to achieving radical social change, and it is such that I suggest is required perhaps for Small's alternative pedagogical and social vision to become a reality. Day's work draws on 'newer' social movements in the early 21st century that abandoned the "universalizing conception of social change" (Day, 2004, p. 1) and instead directs us to a tradition of affinity-based direct action that he suggests through "the construction of alternatives to state and corporate forms opens up new possibilities for radical social change that cannot be imagined from within existing paradigms" (2005, p. 24). As Day observes "It's time to forget the 'new' social movements of the 1960s–1980s. There's something even newer afoot, and it offers the best chance we have to defend ourselves against, and ultimately render redundant, the neoliberal societies of control." (Day, 2004, p. 24)

Embracing rather a logic of affinity drawn from anarchist movements, these forms of change adopt a focus on direct action. This is conceptualized as a break from what Day (2004) terms a 'politics of demand' (p. 86) to a 'politics of the act.' (p. 94) In other words, instead of representing injustice to power and expecting change, efforts are diverted into providing more socially just alternatives to the unjust practices identified. As Day opines: "what we think can only be done via the state and corporate forms, through the politics of recognition and integration, can in fact be done, and done more effectively, without passing through these mediating institutions." (Day, 2004, p. 24)

Referring to Agamben's (1993) concept of the coming community as foreshadowing the alternative to "state-based conceptions of group identity" (Day, 2005, p. 23), Day suggests that we need to think rather in the plural, the coming communities – not in the sense of liberal pluralism however, but in terms of interconnected 'ethico-political commitments of groundless solidarity and infinite responsibility.' (Day, 2005, p. 24) He defines these concepts as follows:

> "In the simplest terms, groundless solidarity means seeing one's own privilege and oppression in the context of other privileges and oppressions, as so interlinked that no particular form of inequality – be it class, race, gender, sexuality or ability – can be postulated as the central axis of struggle. [...]. Infinite responsibility, means always being open to the invitation and challenge of another Other." (Day, 2005, p. 25)

Plurality and openness are also the traits of Utopian pedagogy as discussed by Coté, Day and de Peuter (2007) and this, I think may be a helpful series of directions in which music education may perhaps proceed to offer resistance to the workings of neo-liberalism and to avoid the effects of hegemony. Utopian pedagogy here refers not to Joyce's future, perfect society but to "an ethos of experimentation that is oriented toward carving out spaces for resistance and reconstruction here and now" (Coté et al., 2007, p. 317). In this way, Coté, Day and de Peuter suggest, "Utopian theory and practice acquire a new relevance as something other than and outside of the hyper-inclusive logic of neoliberalism" (p. 317).

It is perhaps in such plural, local, open, creative approaches to music education that we may find non-hegemonic musical alternatives after which music education might shape itself. Indeed, such alternatives are perhaps already there. Baker (2014, n.p.) has stated that "the political ideology that most closely approximates to music making in a British town-varied, fluid, creative, pluralist-is anarchism" (Baker, 2014, n.p.). I wonder whether the same is also true of Germany? We music makers might perhaps always have been anarchic at heart and maybe our mistake has been to try to systematize these practices within education.

If that is so, then our task is, according to Coté, Day and de Peuter, to "circulate struggles that show other educational worlds are not only possible but are already living in our present." (2007, p. 317). I have suggested that 'Perhaps this is

one area in which we too in music education can rekindle some light in the neo-liberal darkness.' (Wright, submitted) Examples could be programs such as the Arts Equal program in Finland run by Westerlund and colleagues, based upon the presumption of equality and entitlement to the arts for all, Green's (2001, 2008) Musical Futures and Hear Listen Play pedagogy extending entitlement and autonomy to students in their music learning, Little Kids Rock and hip hop pedagogies offering culturally relevant 21st century music education, free improvisation work with students affording them autonomy and creativity in relational, dialogic learning spaces, let us keep adding to the list to show that there are still spaces for experimentation and non-hegemonic resistance and reconstruction in music education.

Those of us teaching and researching in universities have work to do as well. Described by Tomlinson and Lipsitz (2013) as a set of "insubordinate spaces" (p. 4), universities can offer "opportunity for critique and argument that can counter neoliberalism" (Tomlinson & Lipsitz, 2013, p. 4) These authors suggest that such spaces are also to be found in 'popular education projects' in the community such as community gardens, community organised youth programs, art projects and economic co-ops. They suggest that by using what they term our 'counter-pedagogic imagination' (Tomlinson & Lipsitz, p. 4–5) we can also find such spaces for pedagogic activism in the community. All these, they claim point to a new 'social imaginary' growing in the margins of society that indicates, perhaps as Small hoped, a new more democratic way of co-existing.

Music education models such as Musical Futures, free improvisation, and hip-hop pedagogies, among others embody alternative models of reality to juxtapose against the globalising, spirit-crushing, technical rationalist logic of neo liberalism. They present collaborative, creative, relational models of education that might foreshadow new societal models permitting collective capacity for democratic deliberation, collective decision making, and public engagement and accountability. They offer perhaps examples of affinity-based, non-hegemonic struggles, already taking place in insubordinate pedagogic spaces that permit direct musical action that always already undermines hegemony. In other words, they offer hope.

Conclusion

And so, to return to the title of my paper – is Gramsci dead in 21st century music education? Empirically speaking, Gramsci, it appears, is not dead but very much alive and kicking, in the sense that his concept of hegemony is still a powerful social force in our field at many educational stages and across many genres. What may not be so healthy however may be Gramsci's theoretical notion of the power of counter hegemonic action to change social injustice. I tend to agree with Day that our previous belief in the power of counter-hegemony to effect

long term social change, in other words a belief in the power of the politics of demand, has been proven to be largely misplaced. I believe however that we have within the history of this planet's complex and rather anarchic musical heritage, patterns for diverse, creative, relational, culturally responsive, non-hegemonic forms of music education that could be conceived of as musical *direct* action. Developed and circulated, such forms might grow and generate more such forms, enabling more people to access and benefit from music educations that enable them to live flourishing musical lives.

Christopher Small's ideas have not yet been realised, the most likely prognosis sociologically speaking, is that they never will be but just perhaps there is a possibility that their time is yet to come.

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